

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO  
EASTERN DIVISION**

**Latasha Brooks, et al.,**

**Plaintiffs,**

**v.**

**Peoples Bank,**

**Defendant.**

**Case No. 2:23-cv-3043**

**Judge Michael H. Watson**

**Magistrate Judge Deavers**

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**Earl Blankenship,**

**Plaintiff,**

**v.**

**Peoples Bank,**

**Defendant.**

**Case No. 1:23-cv-603**

**Judge Michael H. Watson**

**Magistrate Judge Deavers**

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**Stephen McDonald,**

**Plaintiff,**

**v.**

**Peoples Bank,**

**Defendant.**

**Case No. 2:23-cv-3084**

**Judge Michael H. Watson**

**Magistrate Judge Deavers**

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**Cheryl Barefoot,**

**Plaintiff,**

**v.**

**Peoples Bank,**

**Defendant.**

**Case No. 2:23-cv-3161**

**Judge Michael H. Watson**

**Magistrate Judge Deavers**

### **OPINION AND ORDER**

Latasha Brooks, Michael Brooks, Earl Blankenship, Stephen McDonald, and Cheryl Barefoot (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) move to consolidate the above-captioned cases. ECF No. 8, Case No. 2:23-cv-3043. The motion is unopposed. *Id.* For the following reasons, the motion is **GRANTED**.

Plaintiffs’ claims arise out of a data breach of Peoples Bank’s (“Defendant”) system. *See generally*, Compl., ECF No. 1, Case No. 2:23-cv-3043; Compl., ECF No. 1, Case No. 1:23-cv-603; Compl., ECF No. 1, Case No. 23-cv-3084; Compl., ECF No. 1, Case No. 23-cv-3161. Plaintiffs allege, among other things, that Defendant used inadequate cybersecurity measures that left Plaintiffs’ Personally Identifiable Information vulnerable to cyberattacks. *Id.* Plaintiffs bring claims on an individual and class-wide basis. *Id.* Plaintiffs now move to consolidate their cases. ECF No. 8, Case No. 2:23-cv-3043.

#### **I. CONSOLIDATION**

To promote judicial economy, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 42 authorizes a court to consolidate two or more cases when each involves a

common question of law or fact. Fed. R. Civ. P. 42(a). “Whether cases involving the same factual and legal questions should be consolidated for trial is a matter within the discretion of the trial court[.]” *Cantrell v. GAF Corp.*, 999 F.2d 1007, 1011 (6th Cir. 1993) (citation omitted).

Upon review, the Court finds that the cases should be consolidated. All cases involve common facts: the data breach. All cases also involve common questions of law, including whether Defendant had unlawfully inadequate cybersecurity measures. Consolidation will best serve the goals of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure by promoting judicial efficiency, avoiding duplicative and potentially contradictory rulings, and reducing the complexity of the cases. *Magna Electronics Inc. v. TRW Auto. Holdings Corp.*, Nos. 1:12-cv-654, 1:13-cv-324, 1:13-cv-687, 2013 WL 12086667, at \*3 (W.D. Mich. Sept. 25, 2013).


## II. CONCLUSION

For these reasons, Plaintiffs’ motion, ECF No. 8, Case No. 2:23-cv-3043 is **GRANTED**. The Court **ORDERS** that Case Nos. 2:23-cv-3043, 1:23-cv-603, 2:23-cv-3084, and 2:23-cv-3161 be consolidated into Case No. 2:23-cv-3043. Case 2:23-cv-3043 shall be re-captioned as “In re Peoples Bank, as a Successor to Limestone Bank, Data Breach Litigation.”

Plaintiffs also ask that discovery be stayed pending resolution of the motion to consolidate. ECF No. 8. Because the Court has now resolved the motion to consolidate, the request to stay is **DENIED AS MOOT**.

The Clerk shall terminate ECF No. 8 in Case No. 2:23-cv-3043.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

  
**MICHAEL H. WATSON, JUDGE**  
**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**